



The North Capitol Hill detached ADU was one of the highest-rated Demonstration Projects among neighbors, even though it had some neighborhood opposition in its early conceptual stages.

North Capitol Hill Detached ADU

Site Address: 2211 Federal Ave E

Zoning: Single Family 5000

Neighborhood Impact Survey Results

14%	30%	56%
Bad	Neutral	Good

Project Overview

This one-and-a-half story detached ADU sits behind a single family home on the north slope of Capitol Hill. The lot is on the edge of a single-family zoned area, adjacent to a lowrise multifamily zone along 10th Ave E. The existing primary structure is a two-story home built in 1906; it rests on a 4,000 square foot lot. The home is 30' tall at the apex of its roof.

The detached ADU structure, tucked behind the main home and barely noticeable from the street, replaced an existing detached garage. The detached ADU is 16'6" tall at the top of its highest roof pitch—almost fifteen feet shorter than the existing structure. Parking for the detached ADU is provided in a driveway alongside the main structure.

The most notable characteristic of this project is how well the detached ADU matches the existing structure in scale, materials, and architectural features. The height of the detached ADU is consistent with trim on the main structure (see south and east elevation diagrams), the roof pitches of the two structures are similar, window scale and treatments are similar, colors are complementary, and the facade materials of both structures match all the way to the rounded shingles found under the eaves.

The area around the detached ADU is also heavily vegetated, preserving privacy for



The detached ADU replaced an existing garage, and includes a loft space for sleeping (upper right of structure).



residents of the unit, the primary structure, and the adjacent dwellers.

Process Evaluation

Application Excerpt

"This project received a 'should be built' rating from the jury of the (Seattle) American Institute of Architects

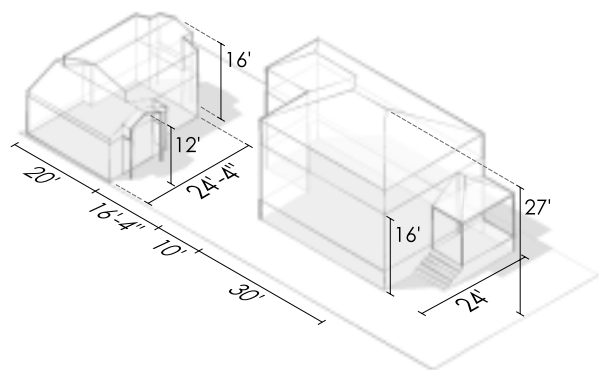
Housing Demonstration Competition. 'Just the kind of idea this program wants to encourage' was one juror's comment."

Demonstration Program Selection

The application materials and comments received during the Demonstration Program comment period yielded a number of responses from individuals opposed to this project (and several in favor), for reasons including dislike of additional density, the preservation of single family zoning, the perception of ADUs as multifamily structures or zoning, increased traffic, and dislike of rentals or tenants. Many of the opposition comments received were on form letters circulated by a neighbor in the adjacent multifamily zone, who was particularly concerned with the height of the detached ADU and the perceived effect on her privacy.

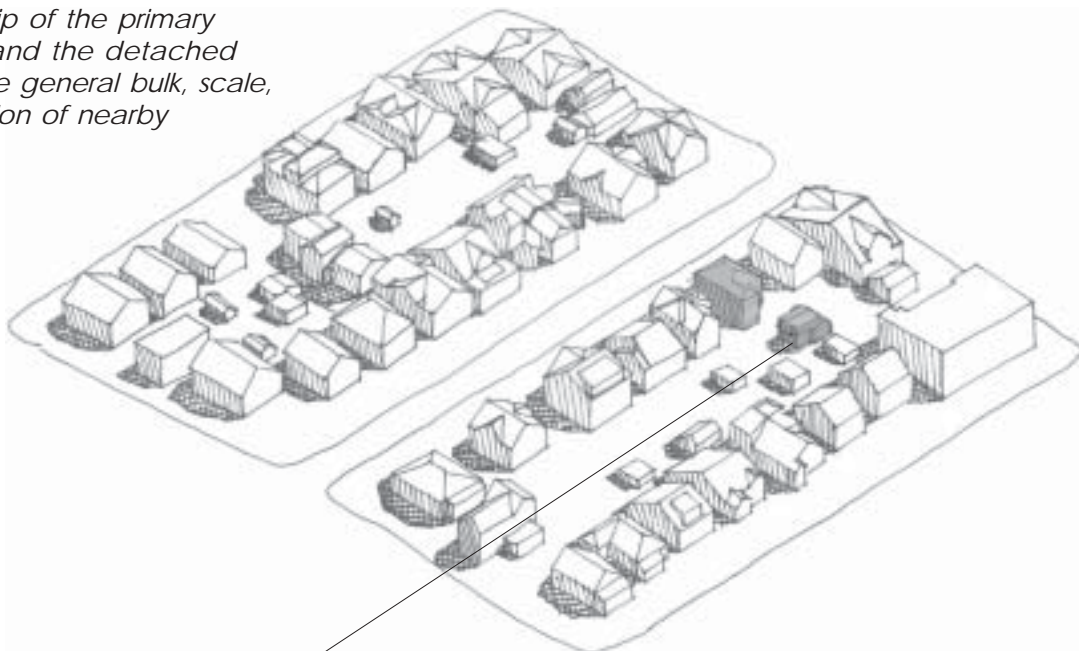
Development Standard Departures

Two development standard departures granted for the proposed project were for allowed height and rear yard lot coverage. Accessory structures are permitted up to 12 feet in height under existing zoning; the built structure is just over 16 feet. The Demonstra-

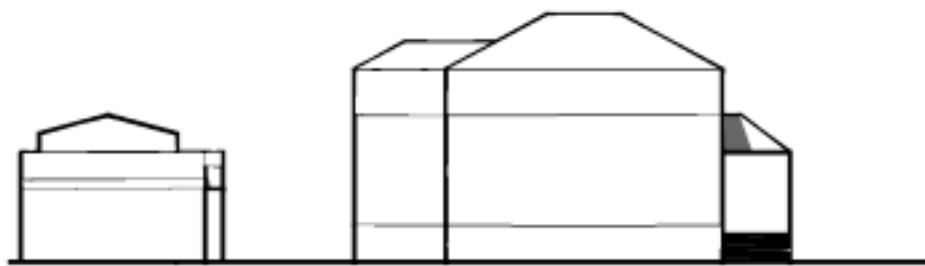


Detached ADU relationship to primary structure

Relationship of the primary structure and the detached ADU to the general bulk, scale, and location of nearby structures.



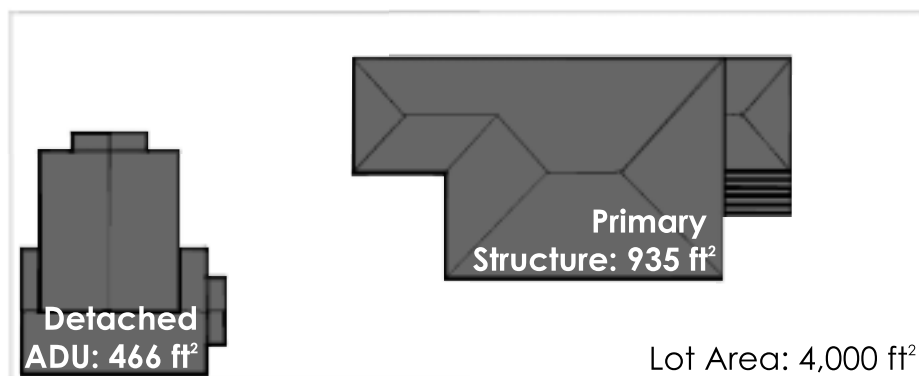
The detached ADU abuts a multifamily residential area.



South Elevation



East Elevation



Total lot coverage: 35% 100'



The primary structure and the detached ADU share similar details and have a relationship in scale.

tion Program allowed up to two stories without a maximum specified measurement.

The proposed detached accessory dwelling unit uses an existing detached garage and has been designed to complement the principal dwelling unit. Information submitted by the applicant indicates that the proposed structure height of 16.5 feet setback approximately three feet from the property line would not create more shading on the west lot than a code-complying garage located on the property line. Additionally, the proposed design breaks up the bulk of the structure and enables the retention of a mature cherry tree; both of

these details could be lost with a code-complying alternative.

Application of Design Guidelines

A Land Use Planner provided the following early design guidance to assist the project in meeting the intent of the Citywide Design Guidelines:

- Window openings along the west side of the structure should be limited and should be either opaque or designed in such a way as to create minimum visual access onto adjacent property.

North Capitol Hill Detached ADU Project Statistics

Lot Size	4,000 ft ²
Lot Width	40 ft
Lot Depth	100 ft
Alley Width	N/A
Primary Structure Height	27 ft
Detached ADU Pitch Height	16 ft
Detached ADU Height/Lot Width Ratio	0.400
Detached ADU Base Height	14 ft
Main Structure Footprint	935 ft ²
Detached ADU Footprint	466 ft ²
Total Lot Coverage	35%
Approximate Gross Floor Area	728 ft ²
Detached ADU FAR (approx.)	0.18
Minimum Side Yard Setback	<1 ft
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	~1 ft
Estimated Cost of Construction	\$95,000
Approx. Cost per ft ² Floor Area	\$130/ft ²
Land Use Permit Fees (includes Design Review)	\$1,470.50
Land Use Permit Fee/Est. Cost of Construction	1.5%
Building Permit Fees	\$998
Building Permit Fees/Est. Cost of Construction	1%

- The proposed structure should contain similar colors, building materials and architectural style as the principal structure.
- The large cherry tree in the rear yard should be retained. Excavation should preserve the integrity of the tree roots.

The applicant included these elements in the design of the detached ADU prior to the review process.

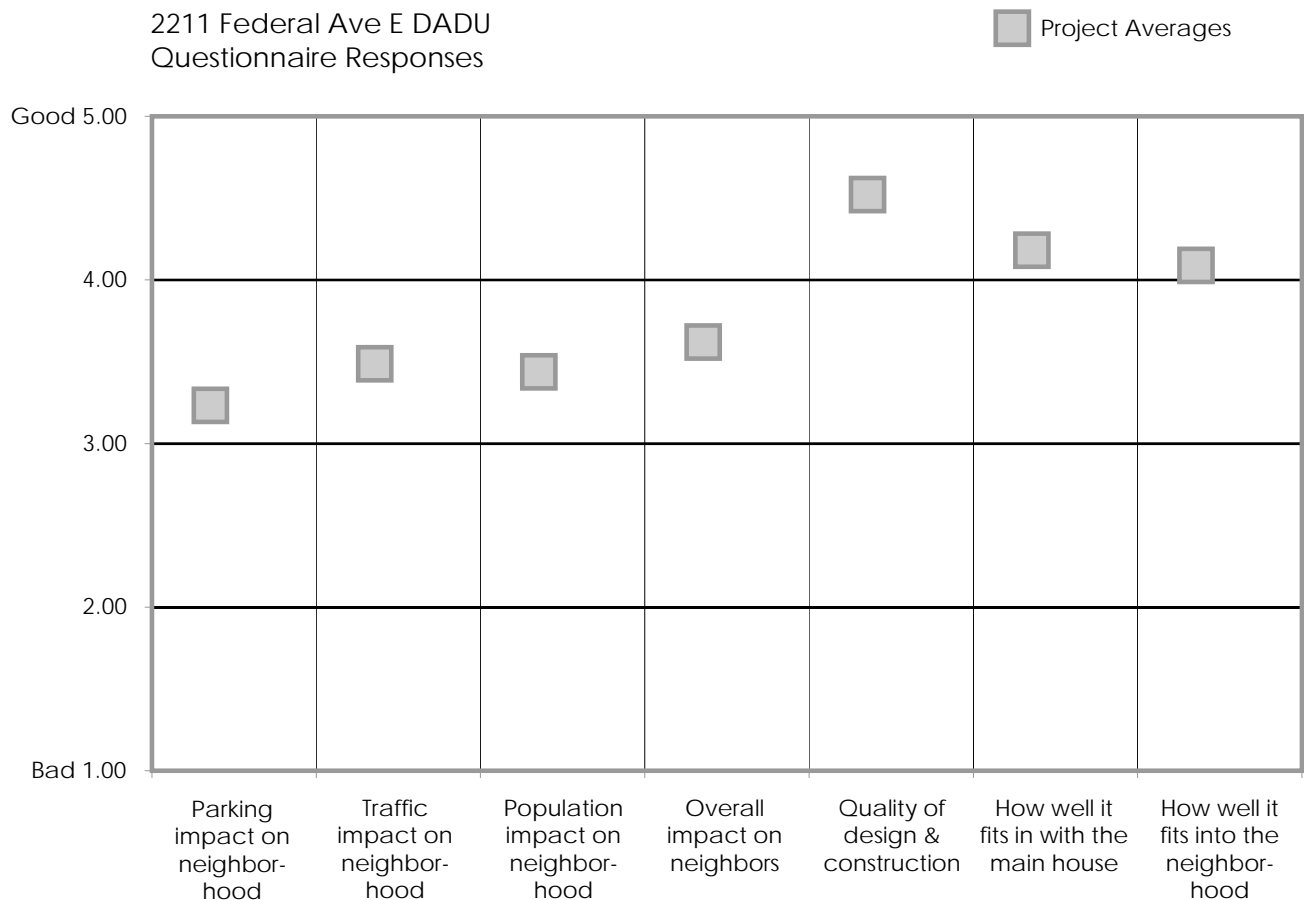
What was the cost of construction, whether a new structure or an addition or remodel of an existing structure?

DCLU's listed construction value is \$41,400, and the owner concurred with that estimate. The permit fees for this project were lower

than normal in part because it was a renovation of an existing structure. As the owner performed the design and renovation himself, many of the usual contracting expenses were saved, and he estimates that otherwise the structure would have been around \$95,000.

Was administrative Design Review cost effective for this type of small project?

Because of the overall merits of the project, it was allowed to go forward once a modified design was presented with shorter height and less bulk (5 feet shorter and reduction of approximately 240 square feet of floor area from the second story). Review took a total of 26.75 hours, and the total permit fees came to \$2,468.50 (about 2.6% of total estimated costs).



Neighborhood Sentiment

What do the neighbors think of this type of housing?

The project initially had little support through the Demonstration Program selection process. After requesting that the applicant lower the height and reduce the bulk of the proposed structure, it was allowed to go forward, and survey results show that neighborhood sentiment about the project has improved. This indicates that some combination of either participation of neighbors in design review, the quality of design and construction, or the smaller size of the structure made it more acceptable to the surrounding neighborhood.

The chart on the previous page shows how this project was rated in the surveys that were



Revisions made to the original proposal including a reduction in height and bulk resulted in more neighborhood acceptance.

sent to neighbors within 300 feet of the project. The project rated on the “good” side across all categories with a rating dip in “Parking impact.”

The project rated the second highest (barely below 3255 28th Ave W) in surveys compared

to the other constructed detached ADU projects (see page 6). It also received the highest marks among all demonstration projects for the categories “Quality of design & construction,” “How well it fits in with the main house,” and “How well it fits into the neighborhood.”

Were there any unintended consequences that need to be resolved?

No specific unintended consequences came up in the neighborhood surveys, although comments about parking were made:

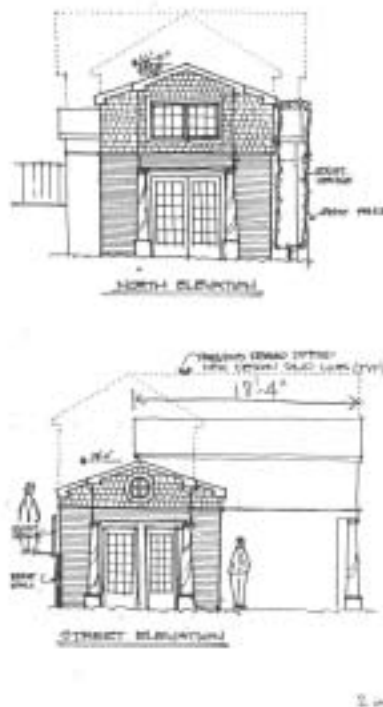
“The many cars parked by their house are unsightly.”

“The zoning is already tight. Neighbors are too close as it is. There’s no parking!”

On-street parking was known to be difficult to find prior to the construction of the detached ADU. The owner did provide an off-street space for the new unit.

What is the reaction of the residents of the detached ADU in terms of livability of the unit and how it could be improved?

The tenant specifically requested their privacy be respected and declined to answer questions. However, the owner let us know that the tenant is happy with her living situation and has rented the unit for several years now.



Conclusions

What were the positive results of this project? What were the negative results?

The Capitol Hill detached ADU is an excellent example of how matching scale and materials to the primary structure can improve a project. The success of the design is also due to the applicant, an architect who took care to design a structure that complements his home.

The North Capitol Hill project fits in its surroundings. Had the unit been taller and larger, as originally designed, it might have been less acceptable to the neighbors, and may have had a greater impact on privacy. Privacy impacts can be mitigated primarily by structure placement and setbacks, and secondarily by window placement and landscaping and screening. Options for structure placement and setbacks are narrow on the subject lot, which is representative of the surrounding neighborhood in its size, dimension, and single family structure size and configuration.

Did this project provide a design concept that would likely be applicable and acceptable in other neighborhoods?

This detached ADU is another example that demonstrates that good design can improve acceptance of these housing types in other neighborhoods.

Lessons Learned

Issues and successes that this project bring to light in considering new development standards, design guidelines, and processes include:

- limiting the height and scale to reduce the perception of bulk of detached ADUs;

- requirements for matching or similar detached ADU scale and materials to the existing home;
- locating detached ADU windows away from adjacent properties to minimize privacy issues;
- landscape requirements to limit privacy impacts for detached ADUs; and
- using a discretionary review process in shaping detached ADUs.



The North Capitol Hill detached ADU replaced an existing garage at the end of the driveway. Its finishes duplicate the main structure.



The tenant of the detached ADU has their own private pathway and outdoor area.